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ABSTRACT

The Oral Language Proficiency Scale is used to determine initial placement of Spanish-speaking students in English as a second language (ESOL) programs, at one of five ESOL proficiency levels. Proficiency is assessed in four areas: oral comprehension, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The scale is based on student responses to a 20-question individual interview; the first eight are intended to put the student at ease, while the remainder measure language proficiency. (This document contains the Oral Language Proficiency Scale; the ESOL Placement Interviews, Elementary and Secondary Level; and directions for administering and scoring.) (CP)

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ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

ESOL Placement Interview

GUIDELINES

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bilingual Education

ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

Revised 1978

GUIDELINES

This Scale is used in an oral interview to provide a means of classification for initial placement in a program of English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Placement is made in reference to four dimensions of language mastery:

A. Understanding of spoken language
B. Using grammatical structure
C. Pronunciation
D. Vocabulary.

The description of linguistic behaviors to be expected at each one of five levels of English language proficiency within each of the four dimensions (in addition to Reading) is detailed in Bulletin 1-C, revised 1978, pp. 10-19. For convenience, a summary level chart of the description of ESOL is also provided for quick reference after the interviewer has become familiar with the EXPECTANCIES as they are described in Bulletin 1-C, 1978.

Directions for Administering

After establishing the customary propitious climate to set the student at ease, the interviewer engages the student in controlled conversation in English, trying to elicit verbal responses that will indicate his/her level of English proficiency. To this end, several Oral Cues are also provided as samples. These Oral Cues should be used within ordinary surroundings, such as a classroom, and in reference to simple, "uncluttered" pictures depicting familiar characters in action. Care should be exercised in the

choice of pictures so that they are appropriate to the age and interest level of the students being interviewed. Textbook illustrations may provide an excellent source, especially since a primary concern in placement is to *ensure the student's ability to cope with concepts within the curriculum offered in English at his/her grade level.*

Oral Cues 1-8 aim to put the student at ease and determine whether he/she is an independent user of English. When it becomes evident that he/she is not, further interviewing should elicit the degree of command of the following basic linguistic forms:

Use-omission of determiners (a,an,some, etc.) (9a)

Use of BE + -ing form of verbs to describe actions in progress, in singular and in plural (9b,c)

Use of expressions of place (9d)

Identification of persons, animals, objects, using demonstratives (9e,f)

Use of present indefinite to express customary action using first and third person subjects (10,11,15)

Use of preterit tense (12)

Asking questions to solve various ordinary "problem situations", to get permission or to get information (13,16,17)

Use of negative statements (14)

Use of expressions of futurity (18)

Use of modal auxiliaries, e.g., should, might, must (19)

Use of connected discourse for narrating or describing (20).

Determining the ESOL Functional Level of Spoken English

A CLASS RECORD SHEET provides the means to record the functional level of English, from 1-5, which best corresponds to the students' aural-oral ability in: UNDERSTANDING, USING GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE, PRONOUNCING everyday English and using appropriate VOCABULARY, as stated in the DESCRIPTION

ORAL CUES

for the

ESOL Placement Interview
Elementary Level

1. Tell me:

   a. What your name is

   b. How old you are
      (Further probing, if necessary:)
      Are you (ten, fifteen)?

   c. Where you live
      (Further probing:)
      Do you live in (Miami) or in (Hialeah)?

2. Where are you from?
   (Further probing:)
   Did you come from (Haiti)?

3. What (grade, room) were you in?

4. When did you come to (Miami, school)?

5. Who(m) do you live with?

6. Tell me what ( ) does on weekends.

7. Can you think of some questions to ask me? About (school, lunch time, the library, recreational activities, dress)?

8. Give me that (book, magazine, picture), please, (Carlos, Marie). What do you say as you give it to me?

9. Tell me about this picture:

   a. What do you see in this picture?
      (Further probing:)
      Do you see a hospital, clothes? What do you see?

   b. What is (the man) doing?

   c. What are (the men) and (the boys) doing?

   d. Where are they (going, sitting)?

   e. Point to (these) and tell me what they are as you point

   f. Show me (something) that you have (a coin, a pencil) and tell me what it is.

OF ESOL FUNCTIONAL LEVELS. Recording the interview is recommended if this can be done unobtrusively so as not to upset the student.

An average level can then be determined by adding the four levels attained - one in each dimension - and dividing by four. In terms of percentage of proficiency, the following ranges have been proposed:

Level 1, Nonindependent - 0-19% proficiency
Level 2, Low intermediate - 20-49% proficiency
Level 3, Mid intermediate - 50-79% proficiency
Level 4, High intermediate - 80-89% proficiency
Level 5, Independent - 90-100% proficiency.

10. What do you usually do (on Sunday)?

11. What does (your friend) do?

12. Tell me some of the things you did (over the weekend).
(Further probing:)
Did you (go swimming, watch TV, read)? What did you do?

13. When you are in your classroom what do you say to your teacher if:

a. You break the point of your pencil?

b. You need to go out of the classroom?

c. You left your lunch money home and need to borrow some?

d. You don't have (your Math book, or a pencil, etc.)?

e. You were absent yesterday and don't know how to do an assignment?

f. You are going to need an excuse to be absent from school tomorrow?

g. You are going to leave school early today?

h. You want to know when you're going to (go out to play, have the next test)?

i. She asks you a question that you can't answer?

j. You want to know how to do something?

k. You want to know the reason for some school regulation?

14. We all have some rules that tell what we can't do. Tell me some of the things you are not allowed to do (in school, at home).

15. Tell me some of the things that a (housewife, mailman, policeman) ordinarily does.

16. When you want to know if it's raining, what do you ask?

17. When you want to know the time, what do you ask?

18. Tell me what you are going to do (this weekend).

19. Tell me some of the things you <u>should</u>, or <u>might</u>, or <u>must</u> do:

a. If you see a fire starting

b. If you want to go to a movie with a friend

c. If you want to pass a test.

20. Tell me all you can about: (one of the following)

a. Something interesting that happened or is going to happen

b. A TV program you specially like

c. Some person that you feel like talking about

d. Something that you want very much

e. What you think is going on in this picture.

ORAL CUES

for the

ESOL Placement Interview
Secondary Level

1. Tell me:

   a. How long you have been in the U.S.

   b. What subject you like best in school

   c. Which one you have most trouble with. Why?

2. What are you going to do when you finish school? Tell me your plans.

3. What did you use to do on weekends in (Puerto Rico)?

4. What do you do now?

5. Who(m) do you live with?

6. Tell me what ( ) does on weekends.

7. Can you think of some questions to ask me? About (school, lunch time, the library, recreational activities, dress).

8. Give me that (book, magazine, picture), please, (Carlos, Marie). What do you say as you give it to me?

9. Tell me about this picture:

   a. What do you see in this picture?
   (Further probing:)
   Do you see a hospital, clothes? What do you see?

   b. What is (the man) doing?

   c. What are (the men) and (the boys) doing?

   d. Where are they (going, sitting)?

   e. Point to (these) and tell me what they are as you point

   f. Show me (something) that you have (a coin, a pencil, and tell me what it is.

10. What do you usually do (on Sunday)?

11. What does (your friend) do?

12. Tell me some of the things you did (over the weekend).

(Further probing:)
Did you (go swimming, watch TV, read)? What did you do?

13. Tell me what you say to your teacher when you are in your classroom and:

a. You break the point of your pencil

b. You need to go out of the classroom

c. You are late to class

d. You don't have (your Math book, or a pencil, etc.)

e. You were absent yesterday and don't know how to do an assignment

f. You are going to need an excuse to be absent from school tomorrow

g. You are going to leave school early today

h. You want to know when you're going to (have the next text)

i. She asks you a question that you can't answer

j. You want to know how to do something

k. You want to know the reason for some school regulation.

14. We all have some rules that tell us what we can't do. Tell me some of the things you are not allowed to do (in school, at home).

15. Tell me some of the things that a (counselor, security guard) ordinarily does.

16. When you want to know if it's raining, what do you ask?

17. When you want to know the time, what do you ask?

18. Tell me what you are going to do (this weekend).

19. Tell me some of the things you <u>should</u>, or <u>might</u>, or <u>must</u> do:

a. If you see a fire starting

b. If you want to go to a movie with a friend

d. If you want to pass a test.

20. Tell me all you can about: (one of the following)

a. Something interesting that happened or is going to happen

b. A TV program you specially like

c. Some person that you feel like talking about

d. Something that you want very much

e. What you think is going on in this picture.

DESCRIPTION OF ESOL FUNCTIONAL LEVELS

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ESOL LEVEL	UNDERSTANDING SPOKEN LANGUAGE	USING GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE	PRONUNCIATION	VOCABULARY	READING
LEVEL 1 0-19 %	Demonstrate very little understanding; speaker must translate constantly. Teacher must resort to home language in explaining concepts.	Use limited verbal expression - grammatically incorrect. Cannot communicate meaning orally or in writing.	Demonstrate limited oral expression - constant distortion of words and intonation. Cannot be understood.	Use extremely limited vocabulary; unable to participate in class discussion.	Read in English with understanding simple, short sentences on familiar matters, with familiar vocabulary, and within spelling patterns or word list taught, if applicable to age and grade level.
LEVEL 2 20-49 %	Demonstrate limited understanding; speaker must always choose words carefully and/or restate ideas even in familiar classroom situations.	Make errors in most frequent and useful significant* grammatical structures. Incomplete, incorrect expression of concepts taught.	Make frequent significant distortions of words and intonation. Very difficult to understand in class.	Always grope for high frequency words and almost always have to rephrase to be understood. Hesitant, "garbled" participation in class discussion.	Read with understanding simple short sentences with a greater number of conceptually related words within the spelling patterns or word lists taught, if applicable to age and grade level.
LEVEL 3 50-79 %	Demonstrate fair understanding; speaker must often choose words carefully and/or restate ideas within familiar school and other related contexts.	Make many significant grammatical errors of interference which create confusion in understanding and expressing concepts and ideas.	Make significant distortions of words and intonation that interfere with clear expression of ideas. Can be understood with help.	Often grope for high frequency words and often have to rephrase to be understood in relation to concepts under discussion.	Read with understanding longer sentences and paragraphs, containing conceptually related words, if applicable to age and grade level.
LEVEL 4 80-89 %	Demonstrate extensive understanding; speaker has to restate ideas only occasionally to clarify concepts.	Make occasional significant grammatical errors of interference, but can be understood in relation to relevant matters, i.e., school subjects.	Make occasional significant distortions of words and intonation, but can be understood in relation to relevant matters.	Rarely grope for high frequency words; occasionally have to rephrase to be understood in relation to new concepts, but generally understood in familiar situations.	Read with understanding longer selections containing high frequency, contextually relevant words, if applicable to age and grade level. Can profit intellectually from reading.
LEVEL 5 90+ %	Understand nearly everything a native speaker of comparable age, interests and intelligence understands; need occasional clarifications.	Make few grammatical errors; can rephrase to make meaning clear in relation to relevant matters.	Make minor, nonsignificant distortions of pronunciation and intonation; can communicate clearly within relevant contexts.	Use vocabulary comparable to that of native speaker of same age, interests and intelligence level within school and other limited, relevant contexts.	Read with understanding comparable to that of a native speaker of the same age, interests, and intelligence level, if applicable.

* The term significant as used here refers to items having implications for communicating meaning.

Class Record Sheet

ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCALE

ESOL Placement Interview

School _____ Grade _____

Interviewer _____ Proficiency Levels: 1-5

Name	A)Underst.	B)Gram.St.	C)Pronun.	D)Vocab.	ESOL Level A+B+C+D / 4